

Middlebury Feb. 11th 1864.

Rev. Genl. P. Tyler,

Dear Sir

You have seen the act passed by the Legislature of Vt. at its last session, proposing to unite the three colleges in the State in one University with Associate Colleges, and to apply, for its support, the funds to be derived from the sale of the land, given by Congress for an Agricultural College. Shall we the trustees, faculty and friends of Midd. Coll. unite in this plan and merge our corporation, its income, our funds, our reputation and our sympathies, in this contemplated State University? If we accept the proposition and stand on chance for the location we are sure to lose; for the whole scheme from beginning to end is framed with a view to place the new Institution at Burlington. The Corporation of the University have decided to commit their fortunes to this plan, in which they are sure to win. It were too that Norwich University will probably accept of the new charter. If in these circumstances, we decline, what will be the consequence? It has been intimated publicly and privately, that the only

which will not come into the arrangement, must be left out, in the cold, perhaps to starve. Doubtless we shall suffer some inconvenience. There is, I suppose, a very general wish that our Colleges should all be united and make one grand Institution for the honor of Vermont, and if Middlebury disappoints that favorite desire, she will be censured by many. Patronage will, to some extent, be withdrawn, false-hearted friends may be alarmed, and friends of sterner mould, may doubt the wisdom of the corporation in declining to accept the proposition of the Legislature. But all this, will be temporary. If we are wise, I am sure we can not receive any serious or permanent injury. After the excitement has subsided, and the mists have been dispensed, that prejudice and passion have gathered around the public vision, we shall stand better than before, with the public and with our friends, but especially with our religious denomination. But we must have an understanding among ourselves and be prepared for the defensive.

We can assign to our friends and to the public if necessary, the following reasons for declining to abandon Middlebury College. 1. It would involve at once, the sacrifice of about \$50,000; for our College Campus and

and all the buildings, thereon would revert to the heirs of Col. Storrs. Probably the, not certainly, legacy to the amount of, nearly \$40,000, more, would be forfeited.

2. If the object of union be to diminish the number of colleges it will not be attained by abandoning Midd^{lebury}, for the buildings will be sold for a college as they are suited for no other purpose; so there will still be a college in Midd^{lebury}, and it may not be as good as the present.

3. It would be doing great injustice to those funds, who have made sacrifices to sustain Midd^{lebury} College — to the alumni who have a name and a home there — and to the memory of those good men and women, who have left funds, in the hands of the Trustees to build up a College in Midd^{lebury}.

5. The interests of thorough education, in the State would suffer if Midd^{lebury} College should be abandoned. In the new Institution, "the leading object," according to the act of Congress, "must be to teach Agriculture & science connected with it. In such an Institution, the higher departments of learning must take a subordinate place and young men who seek a classical education, will go to Institutions, where it holds its appropriate rank

But has Congregationalism nothing to do with this question? The College has been reared by the wisdom, supported by the funds and sustained by the prayers of that denomination, and now will ministers and churches be willing to see it merged in a state Institution, in which that denomination will be in a decided minority. All denominations are there represented, and in all probability Episcopacy will be the dominant authority.

In view of the circumstances, all considered, it seems to me there can not be a doubt as to the course of duty. Middlebury College must be sustained. If it must be sustained, then its friends must come to its rescue. We must have more funds. Can we obtain them?

Please give us your counsel in this matter.

Would it be wise to attempt to raise funds by a general subscription while this question is engrossing the public mind? Or had we better wait until this is finally disposed of?

Regards to your good lady, in which Mrs. L. would heartily join if she were not enjoying her morning slumbers

Very truly

Yours B. Labaree